

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action of June 23, 2004, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that the disclosure is objected to for containing various informalities.

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over European reference 170086 to Muller.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Muller in view of the patent to Kurihara.

In connection with the Examiner's objection to the disclosure, applicants have amended the disclosure to delete reference to specific claim numbers. In view of this change, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to the disclosure is overcome and should be withdrawn.

In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims, applicants have amended independent claim 8.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the methods disclosed in the references.

Turning now to the references, and in particular to the European reference to Muller, it can be seen that this reference discloses a method for installing a roof on a vehicle. In this reference, the roof is an integrated part of the body. Window openings are formed between the lower body and the roof. The interior parts of the ceiling are mounted at the car body by inserting the interior ceiling assembly through a window, preferably the wind screen or the hatchback opening, and fixing it to the roof. This is different than the presently claimed invention because the outer skin of the roof of Muller forms an integral part of the car body. As such, at the time the interior ceiling is fixed to the interior, the outer skin is already in place since it is an integrated part of the car body. Muller does not disclose a process for assembling the interior roof part and the outer skin of the roof in a single step, as in the presently claimed invention.

In view of these considerations, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over the above discussed references overcome and should be withdrawn.

The patent to Kurihara discloses a vehicular roof structure. The Examiner combined the teachings of this reference with Muller and determined that claim 9 would be unpatentable over such combination. The roof panel of Kurihara is an integrated part of a completed car body. In this respect, Kurihara shows the same technology as Muller. More specifically, Kurihara adds a layering of the interior ceiling to the known technology. Kurihara fails to show an assembly process as recited in independent claim 8 presently on file.

In the presently claimed invention, the lower car body has longitudinal frame members belonging to the lower part of the car body. Each of the longitudinal frame members has a joining configuration formed as a bulge. The roof unit has a groove that corresponds to the bulge. The grooves mate with the longitudinal frames which have bulge when the roof unit is raised by an upward movement and joined to the longitudinal frames. There is no assembly work required regarding the roof panel, roof lining or dampening layers that needs to be done from the inside of the car body as was necessary in the prior art.

In view of these considerations, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over a combination of the above discussed references is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on September 22, 2004:

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September 22, 2004
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Respectfully submitted,

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